

Project Abstract

Name of Applicant(s) Clark Fork Coalition, Milltown Redevelopment Working Group

Project Title Milltown Land Acquisition Grant

The state and federal governments are currently overseeing the cleanup and restoration of the Milltown Reservoir area, which is contaminated with mine wastes. Milltown Dam has been partially breached, and the remainder of the dam will be removed early next year, restoring the confluence of the Clark Fork and Blackfoot Rivers and exposing several hundred acres of land that are presently submerged. Some 415 acres of land near the confluence and an associated water right are owned by NorthWestern Corporation, which owns Milltown Dam.

Residents of the Bonner-Milltown-Missoula area have expressed a strong desire that the restored lands come into public ownership and be made available for public use. The plan formulated by project applicant the Milltown Redevelopment Working Group (“the Working Group”) – a stakeholder group which was formed to develop a shared vision of the Clark Fork-Blackfoot confluence area and surrounding community, calls for public ownership, and the Working Group has developed preliminary designs for proposed park facilities on the site. The state of Montana, recognizing the potential desirability of public ownership, included certain provisions in the Milltown consent decree requiring NorthWestern to sell sufficient lands and water rights to pay off \$1.4 million that it owes to the state, and giving the state a right of first refusal on any such sale.

In the spring of 2007, the Clark Fork Coalition (“the Coalition”) and the Working Group received a project development grant for funds to conduct preliminary work in anticipation of a subsequent application for funds from the Upper Clark Fork River Basin Restoration Fund (“UCFRBRF”) to enable the state to exercise its option to acquire the NorthWestern lands and water rights. Preliminary title work has been completed, and a full appraisal of the property secured, which values the land (exclusive of the water rights) at \$1,625,000, or approximately \$225,000 more than the maximum amount that NorthWestern owes the state under the consent decree.

In the present grant application, the Coalition and the Working Group propose that the state authorize the transfer of up to \$1.4 million from the UCFRBRF to the Milltown restoration account, to facilitate the state acquisition of the Northwestern lands by exercising its option set forth in the Milltown consent decree.

Public ownership of the Clark Fork-Milltown confluence would directly benefit both restoration of injured natural resources and the related services. The public has expressed great interest in using the confluence area as a focal point for river-based recreation such as boating, fishing, and wildlife viewing. In addition, public ownership of the land will maximize the options available to the state to design, implement, and maintain comprehensive restoration measures for the benefit of the public. Public ownership of the water right will prevent a private party from attempting to convert it to a consumptive use and depleting streamflow, or acquisition of the right by downstream hydropower generators. Finally, public ownership would prevent these lands from being acquired by a private party who could eliminate public access to this area, which is of vital interest to the community.

2008 Application		BUDGET DETAIL FORM				
EXPENSE CATEGORY		UCFRB RESTORATION GRANT FUND	MATCHING FUNDS			TOTAL
			Cash	In-Kind	Subtotal	
1	SALARIES AND WAGES (List all worker salaries)					
	SALARIES AND WAGES SUBTOTAL					
2	FRINGE BENEFITS					
	FRINGE BENEFITS SUBTOTAL					
3	CONTRACTED SERVICES (LIST BY TYPE)					
	CONTRACTED SERVICES SUBTOTAL					
4	SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS					
	SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS SUBTOTAL					
5	COMMUNICATIONS					
	COMMUNICATIONS SUBTOTAL					
6	TRAVEL					
	TRAVEL SUBTOTAL					
7	RENT AND UTILITIES					
	RENT AND UTILITIES SUBTOTAL					
8	EQUIPMENT					
	EQUIPMENT SUBTOTAL					
9	MISCELLANEOUS	Up to 1,400,000				Up to 1,400,000
	MISCELLANEOUS SUBTOTAL					
ALL CATEGORIES SUBTOTAL		Up to 1,400,000				Up to 1,400,000